

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-13. (cancelled)

14. (currently amended) ~~A network element~~An IP/IP-gateway for processing signaling data and for controlling a connection of a voice communication link between at least two communication devices assigned to different ~~packet-switched communication~~ IP-networks or different domains within ~~a communication~~an IP-network, the ~~network element~~IP/IP-gateway comprising:

a signaling transmission unit for converting the signaling data format of signaling data originating from a first domain into a data format suitable for forwarding the signaling data to a second domain; and

a media transmission unit for converting the media data format of payload data originating from the first domain and associated with the voice communication link into a data format suitable for forwarding the payload data to the second domain, wherein

the signaling transmission unit comprises further communication mechanisms for controlling the media transmission unit using the signaling data.

15. (currently amended) ~~A network element~~The IP/IP-gateway according to Claim 14, wherein the signaling transmission unit controls the media transmission unit according to a master/slave relationship.

16. (currently amended) ~~A network element~~The IP/IP-gateway according to Claim 15, wherein the master/slave relationship comprises determination of the status, and/or capacity utilization, and/or functionality of the respective media transmission unit.

17. (currently amended) ~~A network element~~The IP/IP-gateway according to Claim 14, wherein the signaling transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for converting a network address format of signaling data originating from a first domain into a network address format suitable for forwarding the signaling data to a second domain.

18. (currently amended) ~~A network element~~ The IP/IP-gateway according to Claim 15, wherein the signaling transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for converting a network address format of signaling data originating from a first domain into a network address format suitable for forwarding the signaling data to a second domain.

19. (currently amended) ~~A network element~~ The IP/IP-gateway according to Claim 16, wherein the signaling transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for converting a network address format of signaling data originating from a first domain into a network address format suitable for forwarding the signaling data to a second domain.

20. (currently amended) The IP/IP-gateway ~~A network element~~ according to Claim 14, wherein the signaling transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for terminating signaling data originating from a first domain and relating to performance features that are valid in the first domain.

21. (currently amended) The IP/IP-gateway ~~A network element~~ according to Claim 15, wherein the signaling transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for terminating signaling data originating from a first domain and relating to performance features that are valid in the first domain.

22. (currently amended) ~~A network element~~ The IP/IP-gateway according to Claim 16, wherein the signaling transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for terminating signaling data originating from a first domain and relating to performance features that are valid in the first domain.

23. (currently amended) The IP/IP-gateway ~~A network element~~ according to Claim 17, wherein the signaling transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for terminating signaling data originating from a first domain and relating to performance features that are valid in the first domain.

24. (currently amended) The IP/IP-gateway ~~A network element~~ according to Claim 14, wherein the signaling transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism having a ~~so-called~~ firewall proxy functionality for enabling the payload data associated with the voice connection to pass a data firewall.

25. (currently amended) The IP/IP-gateway ~~A network element~~ according to Claim 14, wherein the signaling transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for controlling the volume of traffic and for preventing overload.

26. (currently amended) The IP/IP-gateway ~~A network element~~ according to Claim 14, wherein the signaling transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for at least one of converting and monitoring and ~~when necessary~~ blocking performance features.

27. (currently amended) The IP/IP-gateway ~~A network element~~ according to Claim 14, wherein the media transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for converting priority identifiers of signaling data originating from a first domain into priority identifiers suitable for forwarding the signaling data to a second domain.

28. (currently amended) The IP/IP-gateway ~~A network element~~ according to Claim 14, wherein the media transmission unit comprises a communication mechanism for controlling the volume of traffic and for preventing overload.

29. (currently amended) The IP/IP-gateway ~~A network element~~ according to Claim 14, wherein a transmission unit comprises one of the signaling transmission units and one of the media transmission units provided on a common hardware platform.

30. (currently amended) The IP/IP-gateway ~~A network element~~ according to Claim 14, wherein a transmission unit comprises one of the signaling transmission units and one of the media transmission units provided on separate hardware platforms.

31. (currently amended) A method for processing signaling data and for controlling a connection of a voice communication link between at least two communication devices assigned to different packet-switched communication networks or different domains within a communication network, such that voice data packets are forwarded directly from one of the different packet-switched communication networks or different domains to at least another one of the different packet-switched communication network or different domains ~~the method~~ comprising:

converting a data format of signaling data originating from a first domain into a data format suitable for forwarding the signaling data to a second domain;

converting the data format of payload data originating from a first domain and associated with the voice communication link into a data format suitable for forwarding the payload data to a second domain; and

forwarding the converted signaling data and payload data to the second domain, wherein converting the data format of the signaling data and converting the data format of the payload data are synchronized by a control system using the signaling data.